

with it; it is a metaphor with an almost inexhaustible number of points of comparison.¹

Thus despite their neglect of ordinary metaphor, we cannot accuse Chinese poets of having failed to exploit the powers of verse to augment the paradigmatic range of language. Of course, Li Ch'i's 'Lute Song' does more, since it repeats and reinforces the selective device of allusion in a threefold, syntagmatic combination.

¹ Ibid.

Oxford Street. Winter

Snappily striding, cutting short capers,
Thousands of girly-longlegs pass below the eye-line,
Trimming time and the pavements away,
Weaving in to occupy the century.

But where do they go to in this winter-time?
To market for beauty preparation, sir;
To bed-squatter rooms, sir; to awkward parents;
To seek new possessions, sit at old desks;
To meet each other at the next station,
Out from home, far from the level crossing,
Every shopping day to the Christmas that never comes.
Only the colours matter, the speed and beat;
The truth and the life are the mini-way.
Everywhere young, they fight with their faces to the show.

And so squares like me, Soho and Golden,
Bless them — often unawares — and are glad
When they visit us in the folded, sidestreet wings,
Spread their lunches over their gleaming knees,
And sit, silent with us in an old romance,
Lovers all, these mothers soon of men.

JULIAN ENNIS